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interest in public events, among all classes of society. In this way, even those who could not read were made acquainted with the contents of the various Publications that swarmed around them: and the press acquired an influence over the public mind, not inferior to what it has possessed at any subsequent period.

As one great end of the Drama, according to Shakespeare, is "to show the age and body of the time its form and pressure," some additional views of this period may be given, by referring to a Comedy of Ben Jonson's, founded on some of the practices which we have been considering. It is entitled

The Staple of News—first acted in 1625.

The plot is confused and uninteresting. A foolish young man of large property, newly come of age, succeeds in his addresses to a young lady, having extensive possessions in South America. The different agents in the plot are connected with an Office, lately opened in London, for collecting and publishing News of all kinds; which is represented as a novel establishment, intended to gratify a passion for news then rapidly increasing. The design of the piece is to expose the extravagances to which this passion led; and the various tricks employed for gratifying it, by fabricating and circulating the most absurd accounts, which the credulous public were ready to swallow. The author begs the reader "to consider the news here vented to be none of his news, or any reasonable man's; but news made like the time's news, (a weekly cheat to draw money) and could not be fitter reprehended, than in raising this ridiculous office of the Staple, wherein the age may see her own folly."

The arrangements about the office show what were considered as the principal places for procuring or fabricating intelligence: the Court, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Exchange, and Westminster Hall.—The Office is thus described:

ACT I.—SCENE V.

Penny-boy, Cymbal, and Fitton.

C. This is the outer room, where my clerks sit,
And keep their sides, the register i'the midst;
The examiner, he sits private there, within;
And here I have my several rolls and files
Of news by the alphabet, and all put up
Under their heads.

P. But those too subdivided?

C. Into authentical, and apocryphal.

F. Or, news of doubtful credit, as barbers' news.

C. And taylors' news, porters' and watermen's news.

F. Whereto, beside the Coranti, and Gazetti—

C. I have the news of the season.

F. As Vacation-news,

C. And news of the faction.

F. As the Reformed-news; Protestant-news—

C. And Pontifical-news; of all which several,

The day-books, characters, precedents are kept.

Together with the names of special friends—

F. And men of correspondence i'the country—

C. Yes, of all ranks, and all religions.—

Among the extravagances invented as Newes likely to be eagerly received, are the following—

ACT III.—SCENE II.

Fittion, Thomas, and Cymbal.

F. And from Florence.

T. They write was found in Galilæo's study,

A burning-glass (which they have sent him too)

To fire any fleet that's out at sea—

C. By moonshine, is't not so?

T. Yes, Sir, i'the water.

P. They write here, one Cornelius-

Son

Hath made the Hollanders an invisible eel

To swim the haven at Dunkirk, and sink all

The shipping there.

T. But how is't done?

C. I'll shew you, Sir.

It is an Automæ, runs under water,

With a snug nose, and has a nimble tail

Made like an augre, with which tail she

wriggles

Between the costs of a ship, and sinks it straight.

F. Spinola has a new project,

To bring an army over in cork-shoes,

And land them here at Harwich; all his

horse

Are shod with cork, and fourscore pieces

of ordnance,

Mounted upon cork-carriages, with bladders

Instead of wheels, to run the passage over

At a spring-tide.

FYNES MORYSON'S DESCRIPTION OF IRELAND.

LEST the reader should not be entirely acquainted with the character and history of the personage, who bore when on earth the name of Fynes Moryson, I will take the liberty of writing a very few words on that head, which may form a proper preamble to this paper, and render it more clear and satisfactory. Be it understood then, that Fynes was Secretary to that noble gentleman and gallant captain, the Lord Mountjoy, deputy of this kingdom during the two or three last years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; that he was a man of various talents and acquirements, and like other persons possessed of such blessings, thought proper to commit to his tablets the thoughts, words, and actions of himself and others, and to leave behind him several printed books of his own composing, for the praises or censures, the instruction or misinformation of posterity. Now, as might naturally be expected, the works of our Secretary, consisting of three or four goodly volumes, chiefly relate to that people and nation, of whose manners, his calling, and his peregrinations with his noble master, enabled him to see so much:—yet notwithstanding his pretensions and his dignity, he has, if several erudite and cunning antiquaries may be trusted, so far abused his opportunities, and turned a traitor to posterity, as to deliver in the said productions divers gross untruths, to the disgrace of himself as a faithful historian, and to the discredit of the ancient kingdom of which he has written.

Without pretending to go deeply into the matter, without referring to grave authorities for refutations, or getting at all